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NORM PARKS OF ILWU LOCAL 8, PCPA

INTERVIEWEE: NORM PARKS

INTERVIEWERS: HARVEY SCHWARTZ

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[00:00:00] **HARVEY SCHWARTZ:** Now we are recording. First thing, is it okay if we use a recorder? Is that okay with you?

[00:00:13] **NORMAN PARKS:** Sure. Yes, absolutely.

[00:00:17] **HARVEY:** This is Harvey Schwartz. It is the 4th of April 2016. I am speaking with Norm Parks. I am in El Cerrito, California. Where are you geographically?

[00:00:29] **NORM:** I am in Goodyear, Arizona, which is the west side of Phoenix.

[00:00:36] **HARVEY:** Let me just ask you some basics to start in with. What I do traditionally, as you probably know, is what is called a full life history and that goes all the way back to when you were born and where you were born. Can you tell me those things?

[00:00:53] **NORM:** I was born on March 7, 1943 in Portland, Oregon at Emanuel Hospital.

[00:01:06] **HARVEY:** Can you tell me a little bit about your parents' backgrounds, where they came from, what jobs they had?

[00:01:16] **NORM:** They moved to north Portland in 1928. They came from Utah. The family originated in Tennessee but they were Mormons and they went to Utah. Then they migrated from there to Portland in 1928. Actually, I live on the property where my mother was born. My grandmother was a legal secretary in Portland, Oregon. She went to Vancouver, Washington—took a ferry, there was no bridge—and she took a trolley car out to a place called Sifton and then walked seven miles and bought the property that I live on in about 1906.

[00:02:09] **HARVEY:** What countries did they come from Europe? Are you familiar at all generally with the countries?

[00:02:14] **NORM:** On my mother's side her dad was from Germany, he was full-blooded German. My grandmother, her history goes clear back to Thomas Stone that signed the Constitution. She was here, I am not sure where they came from originally. My father was English and Irish.

[00:02:45] **HARVEY:** You told me yesterday a little bit about your dad and your two uncles and Francis Murnane and a plywood strike in 1936.

[00:02:54] **NORM:** Correct.

[00:02:54] **HARVEY:** Can you tell me a little bit about that and that influence on you?

[00:03:00] **NORM:** From the time that I was very young—our original house where they lived in St. John's in Portland, which was a working man's neighborhood, was right on the Willamette River and about two blocks from Plylock which was a plywood mill that was owned by Malarky Door and Roofing. In 1936 they brought in scabs and broke the union. I am not sure how long the strike was going on. It was going on for a long period of time. My dad was 17 when he got married and my mother was 15. He stood around for a while then he took off to Yakima, Washington picking beans and hops during the strike. I have a letter at home that my mother wrote when they were on—the hops ran out and they went to Hood River. Franklin Roosevelt was coming to dedicate the Bonneville Dam and she was telling about the nice lady where they were picking apples [who] let her take a bath and so forth. She was about 16 at that time. My father was asking questions about the strike.

[00:04:36] **HARVEY:** Was Francis Murnane involved in that strike with your—

[00:04:39] **NORM:** Oh, yes. I know he worked there. There were several longshoremen. Tommy Monroe was a friend of my dad's. He had become a foreman, he was involved in that strike. Probably if my dad had not hit the road migratory picking, he probably would have went in the longshore union at that time but he was trying to feed himself and his wife and so forth. I am not sure of the timeline exactly. I do not know when those guys—Francis, once he got on the waterfront, he kind of helped the others and they ended up— The fact that they had lost their job and stood up to the strikers and stuff, the longshoremen took them in, I think, around the World War II period. My dad ended up working in a shipyard in north Portland and had become a superintendent. There were a number of longshoremen that eventually went from there like Pappy [?Maynor?]

and a few of the different guys that used to come and play cards at the house. A lot of them ended up on the waterfront after that strike.

[00:06:08] **HARVEY:** Norm, do you know what union was on strike in '36?

[00:06:13] **NORM:** It was the Woodworker's Union.

[00:06:18] **HARVEY:** Of course. [chuckle]

[00:06:21] **NORM:** Later, my father, around 1947—he started back in the plywood patch and then they went up to Stevenson, Washington. He was secretary of the Woodworkers in about '47, '48.

[00:06:35] **HARVEY:** This is the CIO group, right? IWLW. [?IWA?]

[00:06:37] **NORM:** Right.

[00:06:40] **HARVEY:** And National Woodworkers—

[00:06:42] **NORM:** As I was growing up my family was very musical. My dad played the guitar and harmonica. He was in Journal Juniors' band when he was a young kid. My uncle played violin. They would get together and have music jams and stuff but there was always a lot of topic about working people and unions and so forth. My two uncles worked with my dad. There were thirteen in the family and my dad was the youngest boy and Uncle Orson was the oldest and then [?Des?] was in the middle. There was always a topic about unions and the plight of unions and working people and so forth. They were all fairly young at the time. I think my dad was probably about 17 or 18 and it made a big impact on them, the fact that they were working and lost their job and so forth.

[00:07:54] **HARVEY:** Was there any politics involved? Was your dad a political person at all?

[00:08:02] **NORM:** Not at a young stage but he did get up and make speeches when he got to become a longshoreman. Francis actually helped and spoke on his behalf. He worked in the plywood industry, he worked for Union Pacific Railroad in about 1954, somewhere, '55, '54 they laid off a bunch of people so he went to the waterfront and Francis kind of took him under his wing and sponsored him. That is when my dad got on the waterfront.

[00:08:42] **HARVEY:** This is all very helpful. Can you tell me a little bit about growing up yourself, your youth, schools, any early jobs, any military kind of early on?

[00:08:55] **NORM:** I grew up in north Portland, went to Portsmouth Grade School, Roosevelt High School. I actually was in Roosevelt High School when I started on the waterfront. I started in 1960. I went down during the holiday. My parents were not aware of it. I figured it might be a chance of getting a job. I got a casual card and I was actually 17 years old. That was either Thanksgiving or Christmastime in 1960. When I went home that night—my nickname was "Sonny" and my mother at the dinner table said, "Sonny went down and got a job today on the waterfront," and my dad was just livid. I was in my last year of high school and had taken entrance exams for three colleges. I was real good at architectural drawing. I took four years, I had straight A's and the teacher was kind of helping me. I did some blueprints for houses that were moved in north Portland when they put the freeway through. My dad actually moved the house. Anyway, he said, "You are not going to waste your life on the waterfront." He said, "You're going to college." That kind of opened up a rift in the family. The first day I worked on the waterfront in 1960 was on a German ship. I was in Freddie Flank's gang, Gang 34. I had the [?Pilcher], which their father was a cadre for Local 8. He was an old Wobbly. They had a big background but they were both in that gang. I played sports, wrestled, football and lifted weights and I thought I was in

pretty good shape. Well, we were loading peas, 112—pound bags of peas in the tween deck, and I had never been—that was my first—I worked in service stations a little bit in north Portland, Radke's Richfield Service Station, but I had not been introduced to anything like the waterfront. We were going up eleven high packing pea sacks and I started to pass out. I was seeing stars and things and I was embarrassed. One of the guys was Nick Kenny. He was 73 years old and he was down there just flying by me.

[00:12:00] **HARVEY:** [chuckle]

[00:12:01] **NORM:** It was more or less pride. We were in the tween decks with the sacks, we covered up and we started working lumber and that was a little bit easier. That was my first introduction to the waterfront.

[00:12:16] **HARVEY:** That is a great story. One of my questions is "Can you recall your first day on the job?" and you just covered it beautifully.

[00:12:23] **NORM:** I was 17. You had to be 18 to get a casual card and you could not work on a ship until you were 21 so I violated all the rules. How that came about, they used to have benches or seats—it was an old church, the original hall downtown. You would sit there and the dispatcher, which was named Barrett, he came up to me and he said, "What's your name?" I said, "Norm Parks." He said, "Is your mother's name Marjorie?" and I said, "Yes." I had no clue what was going on but he said, "Just wait here." I waited about a half—hour and he came and wrote out—54480 was my casual number—and he wrote out a card and give it to me and sent me on that job. It probably was a couple years later or so, several years, my father was talking to me and I told him basically the story I am telling you and he said, "He was your mother's neighbor. He grew up with your mother." That was the connection, that is how he knew who my mother was.

[00:13:46] **HARVEY:** Did you stay from the age of 17 or did you go do the college thing or the Army thing?

[00:13:53] **NORM:** I picked up a few jobs going to high school. I could not work much but I did work a little bit. I think I made \$800 in '61. The compromise I graduated and I had entrance exams at the University of Portland, Portland State and OTI in Klamath Falls and I could go into any one. I was going to go to the University of Portland because I could walk there from where I lived, I lived about six blocks away. I started working a little bit and I was enjoying the money and I was getting money ready for college. At the time I think it was like \$400 or \$600 tuition. I got talking with my father and we kind of come to a compromise. I started night classes at Portland Community College and out at Portland Airport and different things. I would work on the waterfront and go to college at night. That was the family compromise that seemed to satisfy my dad. There was a couple things going on at the time. There was the draft, which I was somewhat concerned about. I went to my father and said I was just going to go in the Army for two years and get it over with, come back and go to school. He said he was not too hot on that. We ended up in '63 I had been working on the waterfront and going to school at night. They were going to add some B people then in '64. That was the one that was so controversial because of the Black issue. I was not 21 yet. They had a rule that you had to be 21 to get registration, you could not be over 40. The registration, my dad got up and Lou Goldblatt was there. I do not remember if Harry was there, I was not there, but there was a union meeting. My dad got up and made a speech and said, "My son is working here." I was 20, I guess, at the time and he said, "He can vote when he is 18 and he can work on the waterfront when he is 18 but he cannot become registered." He made that speech in front of Lou Goldblatt and Lou came up to him and said, "We'll see what we can do about that. Anyway, I ended up getting registered before I was 21 or getting a B, which is partial registration.

[00:17:12] **HARVEY:** What was your dad's name?

[00:17:17] **NORM:** Ezra Mansfield Parks. He was a Portland longshoreman, his work number was 80746. Then I had two uncles that were married to my dad's sisters that were both Portland Local 8 longshoremen. To go on

a bit with the deal with Lou Goldblatt, they did change it and they took people under 21. The casuals got the first numbers and a lot of them were sons of longshoremen but I did not know until I got into politics, when I got really into politics probably in the '70s, that what happened was the compromise was that they were going to take forty or forty—one Blacks in that registration—there was a total of three hundred. They were having some difficulty but it was pretty stringent. You had to have a driver's license, you had to have a high school education and a bunch of different things. Lou Goldblatt made a tradeoff with Local 8. If they would relax the age limit of 42 for the Blacks, they would do it for their sons that were under 21. That was a political deal. I have researched that and found that it at the International.

[00:18:57] **HARVEY:** Louie was shrewd. [chuckle]

[00:18:59] **NORM:** Yes. I was fortunate, I guess. I would have not have made it in that registration. At the same time I got drafted in November of '63. I got my draft notice. I tried to get in the Coast Guard and they said I had high blood pressure so I go down and take my physical and when I was done I asked the doctor, I said, "How about my high blood pressure?" He said, "It is just right for us. Be here in two weeks, you are going to Fort Ord, California." My dad said, "You're going to get a registration. You had better do something." I knew a guy that was a major in the Army Reserves, his name was [?Gotch?] . He picked me up and took me to an infantry unit over in Vancouver, Washington someplace. We were going across the interstate bridge and he said, "What are you doing?" I said, "I'm a longshoreman, I'm loading ships and stuff." He says, "I know just the place for you." He goes down Columbia Boulevard and there is a [unintelligible] reserve center and I go in and the company commander was there. He owned a trucking company in Portland and the reserve unit had been a trucking company and they changed it to a stevedore outfit, terminal service. 308 terminal service. I kind of told him my situation and he says, "I need you. You come and join." He said, "You can spend a year before you go active." Paul McCracken, he owned McCracken Trucking Company. I went down and swore in on a Wednesday night, I was working with another guy, Karl Helgersen, he was in the same situation. We both signed up in that stevedore unit and after I got my registration and I did my active duty time we ended up with—I kind of ran it. [chuckle] They wanted to give me a commission twice and I would not do that because I knew I could be called in any time. I went to a sergeant first—class kind of overnight and ended up being the first sergeant of the company. I could go up and talk with the company commander and if a guy wanted to transfer or a guy wanted in the unit we could do that. It was before the Vietnam War really got going. I ended up with eighteen longshoremen in that reserve unit.

[00:21:45] **HARVEY:** Oh, my goodness.

[00:21:46] **NORM:** Yes.

[00:21:48] **HARVEY:** I was actually at Fort Ord around the same time.

[00:21:50] **NORM:** Were you?

[00:21:51] **HARVEY:** Yes.

[00:21:52] **NORM:** I was there in '64. I went in in February and about May or June I was A53 up on the hill, the new barracks, I got meningitis.

[00:22:04] **HARVEY:** Oh, no kidding. Oh, my gosh.

[00:22:08] **NORM:** I was three—and—a—half days in a coma. They got ahold of my mother and father and said that I probably would not make it and they flew down but I come out of it.

[00:22:21] **HARVEY:** Thank goodness. One guy in our unit died.

[00:22:24] **NORM:** We had three guys in our company died. I don't know if you know it, they closed down Ft. Ord in July of that year and sent them to Ft. Leonard Wood. Then I ended up going to Ft. Polk. I was supposed to go to Eustis, Virginia for stevedore school but I wanted to get out earlier and I knew how to stevedore so I ended up at Polk in the supply building pallets and so forth. Actually I ended up teaching other guys how to drive lift machines.

[00:22:58] **HARVEY:** I'll be darn. [chuckle] It seems to me somewhat unusual that in the Army you actually are asked to do something you actually know how to do. [chuckle]

[00:23:08] **NORM:** Yes. Yes.

[00:23:10] **HARVEY:** You hit the right groove.

[00:23:12] **NORM:** Oh, yes. I spent more time on Navy bases than I did Army basis. Loaded a ship one time at Tongue Point at a Coast Guard station in Astoria. Most of the time I spent was in Navy places. It worked out good for me because they needed me. My platoon leader was Phil Knight that owns Nike.

[00:23:44] **HARVEY:** [chuckle] God. Let's go on, if you will, back to 1964 when you got out. Do you go back up to the northwest?

[00:24:04] **NORM:** Yes. After my active duty time?

[00:24:07] **HARVEY:** Yes.

[00:24:08] **NORM:** Yes. Yes, I went back and I started on the waterfront. I even used to take truckloads of soldiers down on the waterfront. I was a B man then permit but [?Everett Ead?] was one of my mentors, secretary and an officer for the union. I would take him down and they would watch the longshoremen work and so forth. Everett had been a colonel in the Air Force in World War II and he was pretty—There was a resentment at that time about soldiers but it was the National Guard that went after them in 1934. I was actually in the reserves so some of the guys did not think too highly of it but once they got it figured out—My dad was pretty respected and Everett ran the local so I got to do that.

[00:25:23] **HARVEY:** Can you tell me a little bit [about] different jobs that you did? You mentioned to me some time ago that you had loaded agent orange. [unintelligible]

[00:25:34] **NORM:** Yes. We did a lot of military out of Portland, lumber, especially a lot of creosote poles and beer [?], the victory ships going to Vietnam. We loaded Agent Orange—it is DDT4, I believe, in 20—or 25—gallon barrels. They were on a pallet and every once in a while one of the lift drivers would poke a hole in a barrel and that stuff would slosh around. They would throw mops at us. We did not have any protective things. But that was a concentrate, that was not even like what they got exposed to in Vietnam.

[00:26:17] **HARVEY:** Oh, boy. That is important to know.

[00:26:23] **NORM:** I was on seven negotiations. I negotiated seven longshore contracts and I used to hit the employer pretty heavy about—Pencil pitch used to come into Portland, coal tar they call it. When it first came in for ten years we did not have anything, we did not even wear masks. Then a lot of guys their eyes would swell up and different things was going on. Now they do not work it but if they do they use an air—contained unit, you look like a spaceman. That is how dangerous it is. It has got like eight carcinogens in it.

[00:26:58] **HARVEY:** Mmm, Jesus. You were on seven negotiating contracts?

[00:27:02] **NORM:** Yes.

[00:27:03] **HARVEY:** Wow.

[00:27:04] **NORM:** Yes. I spent close to twenty—eight years on the International Executive Board. Most people can only hack that for a couple terms but I stuck with it for a long period of time. Lisa [?Graf?] is the only person ahead of me.

[laughter]

[00:27:25] **HARVEY:** It is very hard to outlive Lisa.

[00:27:26] **NORM:** Yes, she is a great lady.

[00:27:29] **HARVEY:** [unintelligible]

[00:27:29] **NORM:** I am very good friends with her. Actually I was ahead of her. She got kind of knocked off there for a bit but she has got me beat now I think.

[00:27:39] **HARVEY:** [chuckle] I was going to ask you about some strike stories. Starting out, you were related to Marvin Ricks, weren't you?

[00:27:47] **NORM:** Yes. Not blood related. Marvin was married to my favorite cousin, Berta. He married her. Probably the first time I met Marvin was I was 5 or 6 years old and we went out to Berta's house. They lived out in Raleigh Hills. Yes, I knew Marvin forever.

[00:28:12] **HARVEY:** For the tape, anybody listening in the future, Marvin was a 1934 strike veteran and the last living '34 strike veteran who was active in the Portland waterfront in issues relating to the union in later years. After he retired he was a well—known figure in Portland.

[00:28:31] **NORM:** A very important issue with Marvin was—there are buttons, "Save the 28." There was a striker at the Alberta strike hall, scab hall. He was shot and killed with a .45 and Marvin was one of them that they three in jailed under that Syndicalism Act. They did not have to have any real proof or anything. He was thrown in there for shooting that scab and at the time he was in a dentist's office but they did not pay any attention to that. He spent I think three months or two—and—a—half months in jail during the '34 strike. He was also on the flying squad which was young unmarried. I think he was about 19 at the time and they did the dangerous things, things that you would get thrown in jail for. Where the longshoremen were shot in 1934 in Portland was in walking distance of my birth home, which was St. John's Woods. It was World War II housing. It was at Pier Park. In fact I did a speech with a young man from Portland State at that last summer. They went down the night before. There was a scab train coming to pick up cargo at Terminal 4 and they tried to pull the rails up but they could not, they did not have heavy enough bars and they could not get them up. That was about two in the morning. The next day they came and they went to a farmer's. There was a dairy farm and they got some lard in buckets and they greased the tracks and when the train got there it just spun the wheels, it could not go any further. They had National Guard and they had Oregon State Police and Pinkertons, I think, on it. Away, the longshoremen were scrambling up the side of a little cliff and they shot four of them. Elmus ["Buster"] Beatty was the most severely shot. It actually blew his chin off. A side note is he had the same work number. My work number was 1082 and that was his number. They started the numbers over again. The mayor was Carson and—

[00:31:00] **HARVEY:** Can you hold on one second?

[00:31:02] **NORM:** Sure.

[break in recording 00:31:07-00:31:52]

[00:31:53] **HARVEY:** So the issue of the bloody shirts and the mayor's office. Continue.

[00:31:57] **NORM:** Matt Meehan and the lady that was head of some labor deal, they took the shirt and threw it on Mayor Carson's desk and said, "You're shooting our people." Forever he became known as "Bloody Shirt Carson," the mayor. Some of these details I know very well because Marvin was there and I have talked to Marvin about it many times, even gave some classes about it with the new B men.

[00:32:26] **HARVEY:** You know the book I did called Solidarity Stories?

[00:32:31] **NORM:** Yes.

[00:32:31] **HARVEY:** There is a whole section on Marvin in there. I had a long conversation with Marvin.

[00:32:36] **NORM:** I think I have that book at home.

[00:32:39] **HARVEY:** Probably somewhere, yes.

[00:32:40] **NORM:** I think I got it from you down in San Francisco. There were about six hundred longshoremen there and they would have all been shot but they ran up the tracks a ways and there was a farmer that had a dairy farm. That is where they got the lard. They ran into his property and ran into his barn and when the armed guards wanted to pursue them he said, "That's private property," and would not allow them on it. He saved a lot of longshoremen.

[00:33:22] **HARVEY:** That is great. Do you know his name?

[00:33:24] **NORM:** I do not but it is available. I was trying to think of that young man from Portland State that did—I believe the name of the farm is available. There is some material on that. Do you know Michael Monk?

[00:33:46] **HARVEY:** Oh, yes.

[00:33:47] **NORM:** Michael, I think—They handed out brochures, we did a deal at Pierre Park and walked to the different sites where they were shot. There used to be bullet holes. When I was younger you could see the bullet holes in the fir trees where they shot at the longshoremen. That is long since gone. I think Michael could get that pamphlet that was handed out, he was there when I gave the speech.

[00:34:15] **HARVEY:** Norman, can I ask you what happened to the fellow who had his chin—

[00:34:20] **NORM:** He survived and he went back to work. He was deformed pretty much. He was the most severely short. For quite a while they did not think he would make it but my understanding is that he pulled through and even worked after that.

[00:34:43] **HARVEY:** I want to ask you about your own experience with the '71 strike.

[00:34:47] **NORM:** Okay.

[00:34:50] **HARVEY:** Were you already active at the—

[00:34:52] **NORM:** Yes, I was registered. I got registered A man in '67.

[00:34:58] **HARVEY:** What are your recollections of the '71 strike? Do you have any strong recollections, any stories, any incidents?

[00:35:09] **NORM:** Harry was not for the '71 strike, it was rank—and—file led, I know that. It was a hardship for me. I had two young kids, buying a house and buying a car. My wife went to work for Safeway as a clerk, she saved the family. One of the things that impressed me, it was a lot of rank—and—file camaraderie. We had some guys that had cattle and they would bring beef to the hall and you could get meat. Some guys went around and went to the day—old bread places. A guy—my dad used to call him "Jazz China," he just passed away; "Shanghai" was his nickname on the waterfront. They had bread in the basement and it was a collective thing. The hall that we were in was a Swedish Church originally and the longshoremen bought it around 1950 or '40—something. It had an old beat—up oil furnace in the basement. My dad had studied radio and television repair and was pretty good with electronics. Everett Ead was secretary. I do not know if he was secretary at the time but he was an officer and he came up. We went up and rewired. They had knob—and—tubing wiring, mice had ate it and my dad and I did a bunch of wiring. Everybody just chipped in. It was a collective thing. We shared the work, we shared the bad times and people like my dad and I did things for the union. It drew us together.

[00:37:26] **HARVEY:** Let me ask you, when did you get into Local 8 politics and kind of tell me about that, running for office—

[00:37:35] **NORM:** [chuckle] It was in the '70s, I do not know the exact year. We had some politicians that were not being upfront and they were trading. You could only hold a paid office for a year and then you had to be out. Some older longshoremen came to me. They kind of ran around with my father and they wanted me to run for office. I had run for the executive board and it is clique politics. Cliques get involved and they start running things. I ran for executive board and I made it. I was 26th and I think they had 25, one guy dropped off. The president of the local come to me and he said, "Norm, you don't have any experience and I am going to put somebody else on there," and they did. Years later when I become—I was secretary three times, I was BA I think two or three and LRC a number of times. I passed a membership rule that they go by your voting. If you were 26th or 27th you would be the person that would go. That pissed me off, that is why I did it. Anyway, there was kind of a clique that was running for office all the time so a group of guys came to me and they asked me if I would run for office and they said they would support me. So I did, I ran for secretary and I made it. The guys that were in office at the time would not even give me the keys they were so ticked off. One of them called the president, there was a president's room upstairs. He said, "I want you to come down, I want to talk to you." Jim Collins was the earnings clerk. He was pretty tough, ex—sailor. I got down there and I said, "I want you to go upstairs with me. I don't know what is going on but they want to talk to me." I got up there and it was two of the officers and they said, "You're green, you don't know anything." They said, "We'll help you and we'll screw you," is basically what they told me. In other words, if I played ball with them I could be helped. I said, "I really don't think you have much interest in my welfare." I said, "I'll make it on my own," and I left. The guy that went up there with me he called me every Christmas until he died. He was amazed that I stood up to them I think. Bill Ward, which had been on many caucuses and so forth, is actually the guy I replaced on the International Executive Board, he called me and asked me to take his place. They all came and helped me. The secretary, [?Billy Becker?] , she is still alive, she is in Yuma, Arizona. Those two people, I would not have made it if [without] . Because I was green. I did not have any introduction to politics, I did not know how to do anything. We stayed up sometimes until midnight and worked. If it had not been for those two I would not have

made it, I could not have done it. Bill Ward and Billy Becker, she was the secretary, and Ward had been one of the best secretaries Local 8 ever had.

[00:40:57] **HARVEY:** Yes, yes. My goodness. You mentioned something about the Safety Committee in 1987, that that was an important situation.

[00:41:05] **NORM:** Yes. I just did a Facebook post to Tom Warren from L.A. There were a lot of longshoremen killed in the first of the container stuff. There were a lot of accidents. I was on that Safety Committee in 1987. It was a good bunch of guys. We had 28 resolutions, I think we got 26 of them. Larry Hansen was chairman. He originated in L.A. but he went to Seattle. He had like three degrees, he taught at Oregon State University. He taught down in California at one of the universities. I learned a lot. From negotiating I learned a lot from Larry.

[00:41:48] **HARVEY:** Was Sam Kagel involved in some situation in 1987? I thought you mentioned that at one point, I could be wrong about that.

[00:41:58] **NORM:** He was involved but not '87, it was the early '90s. It was over the grain. We had that [?PV?] grain and they wanted to reduce the manning. Sam was not involved in the negotiations in '87. I have become very good friends with Sam because of my relationship with [Francis] Mernane. Sam knew Francis very well and told me a lot of stories about. Kind of a side note, do you know what a "dog robber" is? A dog robber is the officer that gets everything for a general in the military or an admiral. Francis was kind of that role for Harry Bridges. When Harry would come to town I think he stayed in the Mallory Hotel down 10th, 11th. It was not anything fancy, it was an older hotel. Francis would get him magazines and a bottle of whiskey and have it in the room for him and so forth. Sam Kagel and I used to discuss that relationship a lot.

[00:42:58] **HARVEY:** Interesting. What about if you maybe could go into it a little bit about the problem the Black workers had in Local 8 and why there was such a problem. If you have any take on that.

[00:43:13] **NORM:** Well, I have got a lot of—that was my group. I did a class at Oregon State University downtown, not a class but—actually, what's his name from Tacoma, Magden lives there. He did a presentation. I did a presentation on the Black issue, just what you are asking about. A lot of people they just took it for granted that Local 8 was prejudiced and it was all Local 8. It was not. My dad got branded as a communist a few times. He liked Harry and so forth. He was no communist, he was a socialist. He was very upset over the Black issue because during World War II he was a superintendent and he had Black gangs from the South, Black guys that worked for him. There was a lot of people in Local 8 that felt that we should have Black members, a lot of the public and a lot of the other locals. Local 10 just believed there was a whole local that was under that influence. There was people that supported doing different but the [unintelligible] and the local were organized and kept it from happening. There are some reasons for it. When I gave the class at Oregon State University—in 1922 there was a strike in the longshoremen and Portland took a real beating. I believe, if my memory serve me right, I did some research on it, I think they got about 1500 Blacks from down South on the train up. A lot of the original people in Local 8 were Swedes and Norwegians. They went to the forest and they were loggers and then they migrated onto the waterfront. A lot of those Scandinavians were very clannish and they did not like Blacks, they did not like anybody who was no Norwegian or Swede. Those two things kind of influenced what took place in Local 8, the fact that the Blacks had scabbed and the fact that a lot of the leadership was Scandinavian heritage, a lot of them could not even speak English. If you were not Norwegian or Swede you were on the outside. It definitely was not the whole local, it was influenced by a certain portion of the local and they had some reasons for it too that they felt were pretty darned good reasons.

[00:45:31] **HARVEY:** [unintelligible]

[00:45:32] **NORM:** Francis got labeled as being racist which was absolute BS. When they had the Vanport Flood in Portland in 1948, that was mostly Black people and the city was not doing anything and he went and fought for help for the people that were involved. I do not know if you are aware of the Vanport Flood. That was the second largest city. My wife's birth certificate, she was born in Vanport. There are reasons that Francis just absolutely—A lot of people do not know this, it is not common knowledge, but actually Francis was gay. Lois Stranahan knows because she was very good friends with—my dad knew it and different people but in his era that was something that you did not make public or allude to at all.

[00:46:17] **HARVEY:** Do you think that was why he was labeled as anti-Black? I thought there were some other reasons.

[00:46:22] **NORM:** Actually I will tell you where it really originated was a guy—I am trying to bring up his name, [?Lionel Hill?] in Local 8. He was in my group and an activist then. I called Lionel because I talked to some of the younger Blacks and there were all kinds of stories that Francis was part of keeping the Black people out of the local, which—Anyway, I called Lionel. At the time he was suffering from lung cancer, asbestosis, which a lot of longshoremen get by the way. We used to work bags of asbestos and they would rip. You could not even see the sky there was so much of that fiber floating around. But I called him and at the time he was on pretty heavy medication and I talked to him about it. I said, "I've known Francis all my life," and I said, "My dad worked with him," and I said, "He is not racist." He started bringing up things about in a union meeting which—I think he was influenced by the medication, I really believe that. But he was one that started the rumors. He had a bitterness towards a lot of the officers and somehow I think that—and the medication, he fantasized [unintelligible]. But he told me it just simply was not true. I tried to deal with it and tried to talk to him and he just did not have any interest, he was going to pursue his—But he is really the guy that labeled Francis. Most gay people are not prejudiced, for one thing, and the other deal is that he did a lot of things for Blacks. I was at—in fact, I put it on Facebook the other day, I was at the union meeting. [unintelligible] died in April of '68 ran the union meeting and Francis got up and made a fiery speech about enlightened and worked with Local 10 and actually what he was involved in then. That was a union beef when he was shot. I was at that meeting and I listened to the speech. [unintelligible] never had much of a radical or [unintelligible]. I cannot remember his name, [unintelligible] name. So, yes, [unintelligible] the guy called Francis and [unintelligible] all kinds of stuff. Francis had a heart attack after that and died, died in the meeting.

[00:48:01] **HARVEY:** I remember that, yes.

[00:48:01] **NORM:** To this day I always believe that part of it was over the issues. He was taken from the floor and people calling him things that he absolutely was not.

[00:48:01] **HARVEY:** You have achieved a certain [unintelligible] for working with Local 10 and the [unintelligible]

[00:48:01] **NORM:** Yes. Local 10 hated Local 8 and I probably—there are a few things that I did that I am very proud of and one of them is working with Andrew Delaney and Leo Robinson and those people. I [unintelligible] in meetings. [unintelligible] I think I attribute that somewhat to the fact that I [unintelligible]

[tape out of control]

[00:48:47] **HARVEY:** I'll be darned. This is Side 3. Go ahead. Now it is working, I've got it running again.

[00:48:53] **NORM:** Okay. You ready to start?

[00:48:56] **HARVEY:** Yes, absolutely. This is Side 3.

[00:48:59] **NORM:** It kind of strikes me that you know about Delaney and [unintelligible] A couple of the things I am proudest of: One is the relationship that I—Local 8 and Local 10 were absolutely at loggerheads and I did a lot of—I was just upfront and explained to Delaney and Leo [Robinson] and those people and that is very important to me that they listened to me. Local 10 I had the closest relationship of any local actually. The other thing was things I was able to do for—My philosophy was that power does no good unless you can help people that can't help themselves. I always used—In the early '90s we doubled and tripled the money for widows of old—timers clear back to the widows of people of the 34 strike. One of the widows called me and cried on the phone. I remember the crane operators from L.A. They were opposed to all this stuff and I said, "You make more in one day than they make in a month." I said, "You ought to be ashamed of yourselves." Those are things that are very important to me.

[00:50:39] **HARVEY:** You are still remembered by people at Local 10.

[00:50:42] **NORM:** Pardon.

[00:50:43] **HARVEY:** You are still remembered by people at Local 10.

[00:50:44] **NORM:** Oh, yes. Yes, well, you know about it. I do not know where you heard those things. Yes, I had a very good relationship with Local 10. I admire Local 10 because Harry's DNA is still there. There are a lot of misguided things going on but basically his DNA is still there.

[00:51:10] **HARVEY:** Yes, I think so too. Yes. I was going to ask you if you have many recollections of the night of the 2002 lockout. It was kind of a high point in some way.

[00:51:25] **NORM:** Oh, yes, I was part of that negotiating committee. I have personal opinions. I think that it will go down in history as being—that we changed our tactics about how we deal with confrontations. I made the statement at the table that if the employer got away with locking us out and they would get punished somehow it would be a tactic you would use from now on and that basically has come true.

[00:52:03] **HARVEY:** Yes, it will continue, yes.

[00:52:16] **NORM:** 2002—we always had basically confronted the employer with a pretty hard line over certain issues. At the table we started changing tactics and one of the tactics was that we were going to throw in with the politicians in Washington, D.C. We sent committees and assured them that there would not be any slowdowns and things. Those people really are not our friends. I do not believe that that is the way we should have been trying to handle it but I guess history will prove whether we were right or wrong.

[00:53:06] **HARVEY:** Do you have that same view regarding—I do not want to provide leading questions.

[00:53:15] **NORM:** No, no, that is fine, go ahead.

[00:53:20] **HARVEY:** How do you view the current administration subsequent to the 2002 period of time?

[00:53:26] **NORM:** You mean officers now?

[00:53:27] **HARVEY:** Yes. Yes.

[00:53:32] **NORM:** I have worked with the president of the local. He was at LRC and so forth. I probably know more about him than most anybody does.

[00:53:44] **HARVEY:** You are talking about Big Bob?

[00:53:56] **NORM:** Yes, Bob McEllrath. I worked around Harry, I did not work under Harry. I worked under—

[00:54:03] **HARVEY:** Jimmy [Herman] ?

[00:54:06] **NORM:** I am having a lapse here. The clerk that was president.

[00:54:14] **HARVEY:** [chuckle] Right. What is— [chuckle] [unintelligible]

[00:54:21] **NORM:** Let me catch up here.

[00:54:21] **HARVEY:** [James] Spinosa.

[00:54:23] **NORM:** Oh, geez.

[00:54:24] **HARVEY:** Spinosa?

[00:54:25] **NORM:** Huh?

[00:54:26] **HARVEY:** Spinosa?

[00:54:27] **NORM:** No, no, before that.

[00:54:29] **HARVEY:** Jimmy Herman?

[00:54:29] **NORM:** Those guys took over from Harry [Bridges] .

[00:54:31] **HARVEY:** Jimmy Herman.

[00:54:32] **NORM:** Herman, yes. Herman. I worked under Herman and I had a very good relationship with Jimmy. Brian McWilliams and “Spinner” [James Spinosa] and David Arian, I have worked with all those people and under them and so forth. I do not like some of the directions that the union is taking. My opinion is that there is a lot of business unionism going on. From my time, meeting with the shippers and the journal of commerce and different things is a new way of doing things. I know that people have said you cannot fight, you cannot be militant anymore, that is history. Well, I do not believe that. It works well for the employer, the employer is happy with it, his people that are closest to him. We have changed but I am not too sure that the employer has changed. He has actually become more aggressive and controls the union a lot more than he did when I was active.

[00:56:15] **HARVEY:** Yes.

[00:56:21] **NORM:** If officers are complacent or allow that to happen, in my view that is not the direction the union should be moving in.

[00:56:36] **HARVEY:** Do you have any feel for what might have been done in the Northwest with the grain difficulties that have gone on and so forth.

[00:56:44] **NORM:** Pardon? The grain?

[00:56:46] **HARVEY:** Yes, do you have any—

[00:56:47] **NORM:** Oh, yes, I probably know more about grain than anybody around now. I worked grain—I boarded wheat with my father. My uncle worked at Cargill. I worked wheat for many years. In fact, one of the superintendents—I was talking to him about hearing aids and Corby in Portland said that there is nobody that tops a hatch off like I did. [chuckle] Anyway, I know a lot about grain and I do not—I got involved in the grain and I was actually going to give a class at Oregon State University or give a presentation at that labor thing they put on. I got rejected because some of the officers I think thought I was going to be attacking them, which my intention—what I had written out and so forth was a history of EGT, the real history of it, the elevator in Longview. It is nothing but—PV grain is what it is. They have acquired some new partners but they had a relationship of negotiating with us for seventy years or better. I think that we could have done much better than we did. Absolutely I am opposed to doing away with the hiring hall and allowing them to pick the people that work and so forth.

[00:58:35] **HARVEY:** How could that have been approached differently? I mean those are key issues.

[00:58:39] **NORM:** I think we should have embraced—what was that group that developed—They had the demonstrations in the park and so forth.

[00:58:59] **HARVEY:** Yes. The Occupy group.

[00:59:04] **NORM:** Yes, Occupy. I think we should have embraced them more than—We started to. I went to an SEIU meeting in Portland and longshoremen come in and turned the mics off and overturned the meeting. A lot of the people in the meeting were other unions from Longview, the painters and different people to support. I do not think that that was a very good presentation to other unions about the ILWU. Occupy got tagged with—I met a lot of people there who were college educated and very bright people that were part of that. I think that we should have embraced them more and I think we should have took a more militant stance with EGT.

[00:59:58] **HARVEY:** Okay. That is real, real helpful. When you retired, what year did you retire from the waterfront?

[01:00:10] **NORM:** January of 2003. I was 60 years old. I had been on the waterfront 43 years. Some of it was personal, it was what took place in 2002. I saw a complete transformation of the dynamics, the way that we negotiate and handled ourselves. An old—timer told me one time, "You'll know when it's time," and it was my time. I had to get away from it.

[01:00:50] **HARVEY:** Yes. Yes, yes, yes. Anything to add regarding your family life, children, when you got married?

[01:01:03] **NORM:** I am an only child. My destiny—I was raised to become involved in union politics. My dad had been beaten up and lost the union. I come from a poor family background. Thirteen kids and during the Depression my uncles hit the rail and went to California and picked peaches and sent the money to make the family survive. There was no other way that I was going to be anything but a staunch supporter of unions and working people.

[01:01:49] **HARVEY:** That is nice.

[01:01:50] **NORM:** It just was in my destiny and it was in my DNA. If the family had conversations it was never about wealth and money, it was about working and surviving.

[01:02:06] **HARVEY:** That is good. Did you have anything to do with the Pacific Coast Pensioners Association in the last—

[01:02:13] **NORM:** You know, really not much. I was asked to but I was just—2002 kind of burnt me out. I put it up. I had [unintelligible] I call him, he worked for the union. I had him print up [Lincoln] Fairley's book about the M&M and I felt that— [unintelligible] . There was politics [unintelligible] in 2002 [unintelligible] the clerks and the steady train operators from L.A. started to take over things. It was not part of my ideology. I had a couple different things going on and I just did not care for the direction the union was going. A thing I will relate here, one of my highlights in my career. In 1983 at the Portland convention Harry was there [unintelligible] . By the way, I went to Harry's funeral when he died with my dad at Local 10. Anyway, I was asked by Jim [unintelligible] who was destined to take over for Harry [unintelligible] thrown in prison. Fox was his man that was kind of—he was the director at the time. [unintelligible] He came to the airport and [unintelligible] and a couple other people, the guy that was [unintelligible] . He asked me to bird dog Harry and [unintelligible] . [unintelligible] the same flight. United flew to Reno and then over to San Francisco and I sat with Harry. Harry was a little suspect of the younger generation and I think [unintelligible] . I had a good rapport with him. I told him one time how much I admired him and he said, "Well," he said—"Leaders don't make the times, times make the leaders." I thought it was kind of interesting. He said something to me when we were on that flight. He said the greatest danger to the union—that was 1983—he said is factions taking control and the membership not living up to its responsibility. At the time I did not really think much about it but in some forms that it exactly what has taken place.

[01:04:18] **HARVEY:** Yes. Yes. I think you did a great job here. I am most appreciative that you have allowed me to record you. I think we have—

[01:04:27] **NORM:** I have a lot of history. I do not promote myself like some other people do. One time I read that old man Kennedy, Grandpa Kennedy, said, "It is not what you are, it is what people perceive you to be." [unintelligible] I never was big to—but I think that I did make some accomplishments and I know when I first started I thought I was going to change the whole world and that don't happen in union politics. But I did influence a number of things that were important.

[01:05:01] **HARVEY:** Yes, I think so too. I much appreciate your letting me record your recording. I am going to shut this machine off now.

[01:05:02] **NORM:** Okay.

[01:05:02] **HARVEY:** I very much appreciate it.

[01:05:04] **NORM:** Yes. Thank you.